

LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 561
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

African Jungle Tales

Collected and Retold by
C. J. Bender

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C. J. Bender

HALDEMAN-JULIUS COMPANY
GIRARD, KANSAS

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To
ERICA AND HELGA
My Daughters
With a Father's Love and Hopes.

CONTENTS

	Page
The Punishment of the Turtle.....	5
Why the Weaver-Bird and the Woodpecker Are Enemies	12
One Ought Not to Despise the Little Things..	13
The Leopard and the Goat.....	15
The Horns of the Buffalo.....	16
How the Antelope's Wife Came to Her Death..	19
The Curse of Selfishness.....	20
The Singing Skeleton.....	21
The Woman and the Parrot.....	23
How the Sparrow and the Hen Became Friends	24
Sad Fate of Three Little Flies.....	25
How Mafani Earned His Bride.....	27
Punished Indifference	32
The Ant and the Cricket.....	33
How the Elephant Made a Fool of Himself...	34
No One Can Live on Beauty Alone.....	36
Why Chameleons and Snakes Are Hated by Men	37
Prudence and Indolence.....	39
The Fox and the Hen.....	40
A Test of Friendship.....	41
How the Turtle Outwitted the Pig.....	42
The Man Who Wanted to Fool Death.....	44
The Parrot and the Owl.....	45
How the Hen and the Duck Became Friends..	47
All for the Skin of a Lion.....	48
How the Monkey Saved the Antelope from Death	59
The Leopard and the Python.....	60
The Race Between the Turtle and the Antelope	62
The Leopard and the Crane.....	64

AFRICAN JUNGLE TALES

I

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE TURTLE

A great and wonderful tree, laden with luscious fruit, stood on a clearing in the African jungle. In its shadow all the animals from far and near had assembled.

As they beheld the beautiful and tempting fruit the very sight of it made their mouths water. To eat of it must be a real treat, they thought.

"Let us send a messenger to the King and ask his permission," said the Giraffe, who had, secretly, tasted the fruit.

The suggestion of the Giraffe was received with applause, and after a somewhat lengthy deliberation as to who should go, the Rabbit was commissioned to bring their petition before the King.

The Rabbit, on arriving at the King's court, was most graciously received. The King, on hearing the petition, said to the Rabbit: "Go back and tell my subjects that they are free to eat of the fruit, but the choicest and sweetest they must not touch, for that belongs to me!"

The Rabbit, after hearing this gladsome message, hurried off, all the while repeating to himself the words of the King: "Tell my subjects that they may eat of the fruit, only not of the choicest and best, for that belongs to me!"

As he hurried on, heedless of obstacles in the way, he ran against a stone, turned a summer-

sault in the air, and landed on his back. It all had come so unexpected and sudden, that he forgot to repeat the King's message, and when he got on his feet again, it had entirely slipped his mind.

On hearing what had happened, the animals immediately dispatched another messenger—this time the Mountain-Goat.

When the Goat arrived at the King's court and delivered his message, he was given the same answer as the Rabbit before him: "Go and tell my subjects that they are free to eat of the fruit, only not of the choicest and best, for that belongs to me!"

On hearing the message the Goat, fleet-footed as he was, hurried off, all the while repeating to himself the words of the King: "Go and tell my subjects that they are free to eat of the fruit, only not of the choicest and best, for that belongs to me!"

As he sped along, heedless of obstacles in the way, he suddenly, and with the full weight of his body, ran against a boulder and tumbled, head over heels, into a ditch. When, after a while, he came to himself and got on his feet again, the King's message had entirely slipped his mind.

Again the animals sent a messenger to the King—this time the wise and circumspect Turtle.

Slow, but sure, the Turtle wended his way toward the King's court. When at last he stood before the King and made known his request, he too, received exactly the same answer as the Goat and the Rabbit before him.

Ceremoniously the Turtle bowed himself out of the King's presence and started for home.

Slowly, as he had come, he made his way back, all the while repeating to himself the words of the King: "Go and tell my subjects that they are free to eat of the fruit, only not of the choicest and best, for that belongs to me!"

As he went on, he was so wrapt up in thought and taken up with the King's message that he failed to notice a log in the way. He walked straight into it and, from the force of the shock, fell flat on his back. But he had presence of mind enough to continue repeating the words of the King. After many futile efforts he also succeeded in righting himself and getting on his paddles again. Unable to climb over the log, he walked around it and passed on. In due time he arrived at the tree, where the animals were impatiently waiting for his return.

When, at last, they saw the Turtle coming along, they knew at once by the triumphant look in his face, that he was the bearer of good news. And so it proved to be.

"We may eat of the fruit," cried the Turtle, "only not of the choicest and best, for that belongs to the King."

At these words a storm of applause rent the air.

"Up and let us climb the tree!" they all cried. "Come on, Turtle, you, too, climb the tree! You must not fail to get your share after bringing such good news! Tuck yourself up and get busy!"

"How can I climb the tree?" said the Turtle. "I am too small. I can't even think of such an attempt, handicapped as I am." And he sat down and looked on, while the other climbed the tree and helped themselves to the fruit.

They all had a jolly good time and ate to their heart's content.

During all this time the Turtle was sitting in the grass below, harboring all kinds of evil thoughts. He was brooding over plans that would enable him to get some of the King's fruit without being caught.

At sunset the animals came down. They were all very tired. So they stretched themselves out in the grass and soon were fast asleep.

At last the Turtle's opportunity had come! He was just aching to get some of the King's fruit. Stealthily he approached the tree, climbed it without any difficulty whatever, and helped himself to the King's fruit.

When he was well satisfied, he cautiously slipped to the ground. Some of the fruit which he had taken along down he placed by the side of the sleeping Elephant. In this way he hoped to deceive the other animals and cover up his guilt.

Just as the first rays of the morning sun appeared on the horizon the animals awoke, rubbed their eyes and stretched their limbs. Then they went to the river to bathe.

On coming back, they chanced to look at the tree and noticed, to their horror, that the King's fruit had disappeared during the night.

"O, what shall we do," they exclaimed. "This

thing will surely bring the wrath of the King and well merited punishment upon us! Who in all the world could have done this?"

When they saw the Turtle sitting near by, they cried with one accord: "Turtle, you are the sinner!" "I?" said the Turtle. "The insinuation! I can't even climb a tree, and you all know it! If you have eyes to see, then just have a look at the Elephant and the fruit by his side! It also explains why he preferred to stay here when the rest of you went to the river!" Thus lied the Turtle.

Not taking time to consider and believing the Elephant guilty the animals got so enraged that, without further thought, they rushed upon the Elephant and killed him. In this wise the innocent and good-natured fellow paid with his life for the guilt of the Turtle. His body they cut up and divided the meat between them. The Turtle in recognition of his services, was given one of the haunches. Then they formed in procession and started for home.

On the way the Turtle, puffed up with pride and in a mocking way, began to sing:

"Meat have I more than I can eat,
By cunning I have beaten all—
The giant I have caused to fall,
And to the monster brought defeat."

"Say, Turtle, what kind of a song is this you are singing?" the animals asked.

"I am only singing about myself," answered the Turtle, and commenced to sing again.

"Woe is me, my back is bent,
Because my burden is too great—

The haunch which you upon me laid
Will surely hasten on my end."

"Poor Turtle!" the animals exclaimed. "You will surely break down under your load. We will relieve you of your burden. Come, let us take off the haunch and give you a shoulder instead!" So they took off the haunch from his back, gave him one of the shoulders and passed on again.

They had not gone very far, when the Turtle sang again:

"Meat have I more than I can eat!
By cunning I have beaten all—
The giant I have caused to fall,
And to the monster brought defeat."

"Listen, the Turtle is singing again!" said the Leopard.

"Say, Turtle, what are you singing this time?" the animals asked.

"What I am singing? I have but one song to sing, as you all know. It is this:

"Woe is me, my back is bent,
Because my burden is too great.—
The shoulder you upon me laid
Will surely hasten on my end,
Unless you quickly lend me aid."

"Let him carry the liver!" one of the animals cried. So they took the shoulder off his back and gave him the liver.

They had hardly started again when, for the third time, they heard the song of the Turtle. This time they understood.

"Stop!" they all cried. "This time we have you! You are the culprit, and not the Elephant, whom you have killed by your cunning

and deceit. Poor Elephant! What a pity that the good and honest fellow became the victim of the crafty Turtle! But do not deceive yourself, Turtle! Just and well merited punishment will be meted out to you in due time!"

Not long after this had happened, a big feast was proclaimed, which was to come off at a certain time and place, and they started to go there in a body.

They had almost reached their destination when they came to a high bridge—a giant cotton tree which lay across the stream. On the other side of the stream was a big hill, on the top of which they were to offer sacrifices and have their feast.

The long and tedious journey through the jungle had wearied them, and so they decided to rest a bit before crossing.

When at last they had reached the top of the hill, a fattened bullock was killed, and preparations were made for the feast.

A chilly breeze swept over the hill-top. This was very annoying to some of the animals, and so it was decided by a majority vote to have the feast in the valley below. The meat of the bullock they apportioned in loads and carried down on their heads and shoulders.

The intestines, which, together with the stomach, were considered as rarebits, they carefully wrapped up by themselves in the hide of the bullock.

The Turtle was to remain at the top of the hill, where he would be subject to torture by evil spirits and demons. This was to be the punishment for all his wickedness and deceit.

But once more the Turtle outwitted them all. Being fully aware of their designs, he managed, unnoticed by any one, to crawl into the empty stomach of the bullock, before the bundle was tied and carried down the hill.

After the animals had reached the valley below, they laid down their loads and prepared for the feast.

A great surprise awaited them—for when they opened the load that contained the stomach of the bullock the Turtle crawled out. Thereupon the animals expelled the Turtle from their society and made him live in a desert place all by himself. Barren rocks and sandy wastes are his abode, and he is in constant danger of being trampled upon or crushed under the hoofs of the Buffaloes.

(Basuto)

II

WHY THE WEAVER-BIRD AND THE WOODPECKER ARE ENEMIES

The Woodpecker and the Weaver-Bird one day went on a hike together. When they saw that they could not reach their destination the same day any more, the Woodpecker suggested that they build huts for themselves in which they could put up for the night.

"All right," said the Weaver. And they went to work.

The Weaver wove his nest and fastened it on the branch of a cocoanut palm, while the Woodpecker cut a hole in the trunk of a tree.

When they had finished their huts, they both went to sleep.

During the night a tornado came up, which completely demolished the house of the weaver. It all came so suddenly that he barely escaped with his life.

In his distress the Weaver went to the Woodpecker, whom the fury of the storm had been unable to touch in his snug little house. "Friend," said the Weaver to the Woodpecker, "the storm has wrecked my house and I cannot build another in this inclement weather. I suppose you can hear how the rain is coming down in torrents, I pray you, take me in for the rest of the night."

"Get away! Don't disturb me!" screeched the Woodpecker, and slammed the door in the face of the Weaver.

Ever since that night the Weaver and the Woodpecker are bitter enemies.

(Wakweli)

III

ONE OUGHT NOT TO DESPISE THE LITTLE THINGS

The Mouse one day went out for a walk and on the way met the Elephant.

When the Elephant saw the Mouse coming along he said: "You detestable good-for-nothing little thing, what do you mean by promenading on the same avenue with respectable folks like me? Clear out, I say, or nothing but a grease-spot will be left of you!"

"Pardon me, Sir," said the little Mouse; "before the King all men are equal, and I am neither boastful nor wrong when I say that

I have as much right on this avenue as you have, even though I do seem insignificant and small. I advise you, Sir, do not despise the little things! Without boasting I can assure you, that I can bring you flat on your back, small though I am."

"What? What did you say?" roared the Elephant, and at the same time making a mad rush toward the Mouse, intent on crushing the courageous little fellow.

But the Mouse was equal to the situation and had made his plans in advance. When he saw the Elephant rush forward, he met him half-way, drew himself in position, and, with one big leap, landed on the Elephant's back.

"What are you up to, you rascal!" the Elephant roared.

"To teach you a much needed lesson," calmly answered the Mouse.

Then the Mouse placed himself in position on the Elephant's back, just above the root of his tail, where the Elephant could reach least with his trunk, and then set to work. With his sharp little teeth he commenced to gnaw through the Elephant's hide, then into his flesh, deeper and deeper.

The Elephant roared and was almost beside himself with pain. Fiercely he slashed his back with his trunk. But every effort that he made to dislodge the Mouse and rid himself of his tormenter proved futile.

At last the Elephant, unable to help himself in any other way, threw himself on his back.
—The little Mouse had conquered the giant.
(Bulu)

IV

THE LEOPARD AND THE GOAT

The Leopard and the Goat were friends. One day they went out camping together. They built themselves a hut in a secluded spot in the jungle, where they could live and do just as they pleased.

After they had everything in shape, the Leopard went hunting. He met with unusual good luck and returned with much game. On this they lived for a number of days.

Then it was the Goat's turn to furnish supplies. But instead of going after the game himself he went to a hunter and bought what he wanted in the line of food. He also bought a leopard-skin which the hunter offered for sale.

When he reached home, the Goat hid the leopard-skin back of the hut, but the meat he took along inside.

One day they had completely run out of food, and they were obliged to go to bed without their usual meal.

At midnight the Leopard got up, pulled the Goat by the leg and cried: "Say, you, how about a bite to eat?"

Then the Goat awoke, commenced to scold the Leopard and cried: "What, you want something to eat from me? Don't you know that I have killed and eaten many Leopards already? Better be quiet, or I'll eat you, too!" Then he went and got the leopard-skin, held it in front of the Leopard and said: "Do you see this? Be careful, I say, or something sim-

ilar is going to happen to your own hide. And then, don't you smell that peculiar odor about me? I tell you, I am a pretty dangerous fellow, and no doubt about it. If you know what's good for you, you'll keep out of my way!"

Then the Leopard began to fear for his life and fled. Even to the present day a Leopard will not touch a He-Goat—he is afraid of him and runs away.

(Wakweli)

V

THE HORNS OF THE BUFFALO

One upon a time there was a great famine. And the Buffalo said to his family: "I can't bear it any longer to see you suffer. Besides, I feel that it's coming to the last with me. I'm going out on the prairie to die."

And he went.

After he had gone some distance he came to a wonderfully clear little lake. As he stood on its shore, he heard the laugh of an old woman, coming out of the water, as it seemed.

It occurred to him that he might try his luck in fishing. So he got out his fishing tackle and commenced to fish. Presently he felt something tugging on the line, and he pulled in. Instead of a fish he had a curiously shaped horn on his hook.

As he examined the horn, a story came to his mind which he had heard when a boy, about two horns that did some wonderful things for those who recognized them. One of the two horns would supply worthy per-

sons with food, while the other would punish evildoers.

And he said to the horn: "If you are the horn that supplies food, then cook for me; but if you are the horn that punishes, then punish me!"

Thereupon the horn supplied him with plenty of food, and he ate. When he was satisfied, he arose, put the horn in a sack and took it home with him to his hut. There he said: "If you are the horn that supplies food, then cook for my wife and child."

Again the horn supplied them with much food. They ate until they had satisfied their hunger, and then went out to play and make merry. Despite the famine that held the land in its terrible grip, the Buffalo and his family had enough and to spare, because the horn supplied all their needs.

One day, while the Buffalo was working in his field, Mekir, a distant relative of the Elephant, came along. And he said to the child of the Buffalo, who was playing and making merry in front of his father's hut: "This beats all! How can you play and be merry when famine is ravaging the land and killing the people?"

"We are not in want," said the boy. "My father has a wonderful horn that supplies us with all the food we need. We have both enough and to spare. The famine does not concern us since my father is in possession of the horn."

Then Mekir entered the hut and searched for the horn. When he had found it, he said: "If

you are the horn that supplies men with food, then supply me; but if you are the horn that punishes, then punish me."

Again the horn prepared much food, and Mekir ate to his heart's content. Then he took the horn and carried it off to his town.

When the Buffalo came home and looked for his horn it was gone.—

Immediately he went to the pond to try his fisherman's luck a second time. He indeed succeeded in hooking another horn, and he said: "If you are a horn that supplies men with food, then supply me; but if you are a horn that punishes, then punish me!" And the horn punished him most severely and kept on beating him until he said: "I pray you, let off punishing me! But come along with me to my hut and also punish my wife."

Then the Buffalo put the horn into a sack and took it along home. When he reached his hut he said to the horn: "If you are a horn that punishes, then punish my wife, my son, and all the rest of the people in town!"

And the horn went straight to work and punished them all.

At last the Buffalo said: "It is enough now, hold on. Nevertheless, there is still somebody left for you to punish."

Several months later the Mekir came for the second time to the hut of the Buffalo. And he found the son of the Buffalo playing in front of the hut and said to him: "Are you still playing and making merry, regardless of the famine that still has the land in its grip?"

And the boy answered and said: "Don't

you know that my father has another horn that supplies food? And much more than the first."

"Where is this horn?" the Mekir asked.

"In the same place where you found the first one," said the boy.

Then the Mekir went into the hut, found the horn and said: "If you are a horn that supplies men with food, then supply me; but if you are a horn that punishes, then punish me."

Then the horn punished the Mekir so severely that he dropped the first horn, which he had with him, and fled.

(Wute)

VI

HOW THE ANTELOPE'S WIFE CAME TO HER DEATH

The Leopard and the Antelope were intimate friends.

One day it happened that the wife of the Antelope became seriously ill, and he was at a loss what to do. He knew nothing about medicine, and the old doctor to whom he and his neighbors were accustomed to go with their bodily ills, had died only a short time before.

When he had come to his wits ends he be-thought himself of his friend, the Leopard. So he hurried to the Leopard's hut as quick as his feet would carry him. The anxiety for his mate, who screamed in her agony, seemed to lend him wings.

The Leopard, on hearing the sad news, said

to the Antelope: "Friend, be of good cheer! We'll go to your hut at once and see what can be done."

When they arrived at the hut of the Antelope, they found the patient lying on a mat, sleeping.

And the Leopard said to the Antelope: "Gather some dry banana-leaves and place them over your wife's stomach. When you have done this, build a fire on top."

The Antelope did exactly as he was told. But he had hardly lit the fire, when his wife was enveloped in flames and died. Then the eyes of the Antelope were opened, and his friendship with the Leopard came to an abrupt end.

(Wakweli)

VII

THE CURSE OF SELFISHNESS

Five maidens one day took their baskets and went to the river to fish. One of their number caught many fishes, while the other four caught none at all. And they said to their more fortunate friend: "Let us have a few of your fishes; you have so many, and we have none at all."

"No!" said she, "what I have caught I keep for myself."

And they all started for home.

They had gone quite a distance when the maiden who had caught the many fishes discovered, that she had lost her arm-ring charm. And she asked her companions to go along back with her and help her find it.

"No!" said they. "Ask your fishes to go along with you. You know that we are your friends, yet you would not let us have a few fishes when we asked you!"

So the maiden went alone to the river. There she met a Python. On seeing him she became charmed by him and was unable to move from the spot. And the Python killed and devoured her.

Thus this selfish maiden not only lost all of her fishes, but her life as well.

(Wakweli)

VIII

THE SINGING SKELETON

A certain man had two sons. The older one of the two boys caused his father much trouble. He not only was disobedient and unruly, but he also hated his younger brother, who was the direct opposite of him.

One day their father sent them to the woods to pick some wild flowers, which grew in great profusion and variety at a certain place near a deep gully.

On their way to the woods they passed through a town where a dance was just going on. When the elder brother saw this, he went and joined the dancers. The younger brother called him and said: "Come on, my brother, let us do our father's bidding and go to the woods!" But he would not.

Thereupon the younger brother went alone to the woods. He found many flowers and picked a big bunch.

On his way home he met his elder brother

who asked him for the flowers. "Why did you not come along with me and pick some for yourself, instead of idling away your time at the dance? I picked these flowers for father and intend to take them to him," the younger brother said.

At these words the elder brother got very angry, and he threw his younger brother down a deep ravine, so that he died. The flowers he took along for his father.

When he came home, his father asked him. "Where is your younger brother?"

"I do not know. He and I were not at the same place," he lied.

The parents at first did not feel alarmed about the absence of their younger son. "Something had detained him, or he has met one of his friends on the way," they thought. They were sure that he would be home before night. But he did not come home that night, nor the next morning, nor the day after. Then they went in search of him. When they failed to find him, their sorrow was great.

About six months later the mother went to the woods in search of firewood, and it happened that she came near the place where her younger son had come to his death. There she found a well preserved human skeleton. And she picked it up, thinking that it would be something very interesting to sing about.

As she commenced to sing it seemed to her that the skeleton, too, sang, and she listened. And this is what the skeleton sang: "My dear mother! When I went to pick flowers

my brother threw me down this ravine! He also took my flowers!"

When the mother heard this, she took the skeleton along home.

On reaching her hut she at once called her oldest son and his father and told them how she had found the skeleton and what it had revealed to her. Then she said to the skeleton: "Sing, that all may hear!"

And the skeleton sang and said: "When I went to pick flowers, my brother threw me into a deep ravine. He also took away my flowers."

When the father heard this he got into a rage, rushed at his older son and killed him. Thus the sin of this wicked son was found out and punished.

(Wakweli)

IX

THE WOMAN AND THE PARROT

A woman one day went to market with a load of sweet potatoes, which she intended to exchange for dried fish.

When passing a certain lonely spot by the roadside a robber suddenly sprang upon her and said: "Where are you going?"

"To market," the woman replied.

And with whom do you stay?" the robber continued.

"With my husband," said the woman.

"You lie!" cried the robber.

"Of a truth!" the woman replied.

Then the robber said: "Call your husband that I may hear."

And the woman called with a loud voice: "Munyamio-o! My husba-a-and!" And presently the answer came back: "Fo-o-o!" But it was a parrot that answered.

"Did you hear?" said the woman. And the robber left her.

X

HOW THE SPARROW AND THE HEN BECAME FRIENDS

The animals one day said to the Sparrow: "Why don't you build a house for yourself?"

"The audacity!" haughtily answered the sparrow. "To talk of me building a house when the trees are bare and without leaves! I did build a house at one time, but it fell down in a heap. It will be a long while before I build another!"

One day he was very hungry, and he seated himself on top of a banana stalk. Looking down from his lofty perch, he happened to see some tempting red berries in the brambles below. They looked altogether too tempting! So, without further thought, he made a dive for the tempting morsel and presently found himself caught in a snare, which some of the naughty village-boys—his sworn enemies—had laid.

It so happened that about this time the Hen came along, in search of food for her little ones. She found the Sparrow held tight in the snare, screaming, and vainly trying to free himself.

The Hen, on seeing the sorry plight the Sparrow was in, was moved with compassion

and pity. So, spreading her wings, she swung herself aloft and perched on the snare. This tore from the force of her weight, and the Sparrow was freed.

Some time after, while the Hen was busily engaged looking for worms, a hawk suddenly appeared, intent on carrying off her little chicks that were basking in the sun in front of the hut.

The Sparrow, who was sitting near by, saw the danger the little chickies were in and led them to a place of safety.

After a while the Hen returned. Then the Sparrow told her what had happened, and how he had saved her children from certain death.

On that day the Hen and the Sparrow became intimate friends, and their friendship has not ceased even to the present day.

XI

THE SAD FATE OF THREE LITTLE FLIES

Once upon a time there was a Fly who had three children.

When the children were old enough to take care of themselves, their mother called them to her and gave them some good and much needed advice. To the eldest she said: "My child, beware of honey!" The second child she admonished: "Whatever you do, never drink palmwine!" And to the third and youngest she said: "My son, never play with fire!"

One day the eldest of the children went to the woods, and there he found some wild honey.

On looking at it, he exclaimed: "Ah, this is the very thing of which mother has forbidden me to eat! How I do wish to taste it! Just to taste of it cannot be so wrong!" And he drew nearer and nearer, and at last he began to taste. "O, such delicious honey!" he exclaimed, when he discovered that it was sweet. "How absurd of mother to forbid me eating it!" Before he knew it he stood right in it. After awhile he noticed that the honey stuck to his legs, and he tried to get away, but could not. He was caught in a trap and perished.

The second child found some new palmwine which had collected in a pumpkin bowl. This too tasted sweet. At first he only sipped of it. Then he commenced to drink in full draughts. But after a while the new wine started to ferment in his stomach, and he died.

The third and youngest child was attracted by the alluring beauty of a blazing fire. Again and again he fluttered around it; closer and closer he came to the treacherous flames, until at last he singed his wings, fell into the fire and died.

For over a week the anxious and grief-stricken mother waited for the return of her children, but in vain. Then she went to a witchdoctor, who lived in a hut all by himself in the jungle, and told him the cause of her grief. The witchdoctor, on hearing her story, looked at her with piercing eyes and then said: "Your children have transgressed your laws! Their disobedience has killed them!"

So these foolish little flies perished on account of their disobedience. Had they believed

and obeyed their mother, they would not have died.

(Wakweli.)

XII

HOW MAFANI EARNED HIS BRIDE

Once upon a time there lived a boy, whose name was Mafani.

One day Mafani came to his Grandmother and said: "Grandmother dear, do let me have a cutlass! I want to go and set some bird-traps!"

"I cannot let you have a cutlass, my son. I fear you will hurt yourself," the Grandmother said.

But Mafani was not so easily discouraged. He picked up a fragment of a cooking pot, sharpened one end of it on a stone and used it instead of a cutlass. Then he went and cut a number of long and slender shoots, covered them with a thick sticky mass, which he had prepared from the sap of the gum-tree, and planted them in the midst of a grass-patch.

He had hardly placed the traps, when a turtle-dove perched on one of them and was caught and Mafani took the dove to his hut and prepared it for his noonday meal. But his Grandmother took the bird and ate it.

Then Mafani said to his Grandmother: "When I asked you for a cutlass, you would not let me have it, but now you have eaten my bird. It is only just that you pay me for it."

And his Grandmother gave him a cutlass.

Then Mafani took the cutlass and went on

a trip. On the way he met some people who were building a dam, so that they would have enough water for the dry season. They had some difficulty in ramming the sticks, because they were not properly sharpened.

Mafani watched them for some time. Finally he walked up and said: "Why don't you folks sharpen your sticks? How foolish of you to waste your time and strength in this way!"

"But we have no cutlass wherewith we could sharpen the sticks," the people replied.

"I have an excellent cutlass with me, sharp enough to cut a log," said Mafani. "I can let you have it, if you care!"

So they took Mafani's cutlass and sharpened their sticks. But in their eagerness to be through in a hurry they used it rather roughly and broke it in two.

Then Mafani said: "You have broken my cutlass and must pay for it." And they gave him some calabashes filled with drinking water. This he took and went on.

After a while he met some people who were collecting edible ants. Having been out in the heat for some time, they suffered from thirst. So when Mafani came along they begged him to let them have some water.

"I am willing to help you out, but don't drink it all," said Mafani. But when the people tasted the water they kept on drinking until not a drop of it was left.

And Mafani said: "Now pay me for the water!" And they gave him a measure of ants.

As Mafani passed on he saw some birds busily engaged in collecting oil-seeds for their

evening meal. And he asked them and said: "Why do you eat these seeds? They will surely make you sick. Better try some of these ants. Here, help yourself and give me back the rest!" And he handed them the measure of ants.

And the birds commenced to eat, and they kept on eating until the last ant was done away with.

Then said Mafani to the birds: "Now that you have eaten all the ants it is only fair that you pay me for them."

When the birds heard this, they flew to a tree near by and plucked plenty of fruit. This they gave in exchange for the ants. Mafani took the fruit and passed on.

After he had gone some distance he came to a big hill. He was too tired to climb the hill with a load on his head. So he threw himself down in the shadow of a palm-tree to rest. There he met a party of hunters. They were very hungry and wistfully looked at Mafani's fruit.

When Mafani saw this he told the men to help themselves. In a short time they had eaten all the fruit and not a bit of it was left.

This was not at all to Mafani's liking, and he said: "Listen, friends! I invited you to help yourself to some fruit, but I did not give you permission to eat it all. Now that you have actually eaten every bit of it I must insist that you pay me for it." And they paid him with the leg of a pig.

As Mafani passed on again he came to a lonely hut where an old woman was drying

some salt by the fire. And he placed the meat which the hunters had given him on the fire to roast. When it was well done, the old woman took it and ate it all up. Then Mafani said to the woman: "Since you have eaten all my meat, it is only just that you pay for it." The woman consented and gave him a measure of salt.

Shortly after, as Mafani was passing over the top of the hill he met the Wind who was driving some dry leaves and puffs of cotton from a nearby cotton-tree before him. "How foolish of you," said Mafani to the Wind. "You had better take some of my salt and sprinkle it on the path before you." Thereupon the Wind took hold of the salt, and in the twinkling of an eye it was gone.

Then Mafani said to the Wind: "Did I not tell you to take only a part of my salt? Now that you have taken all you may as well pay for it." Then the Wind called another Wind, caught it in a bag and gave it to Mafani.

As Mafani passed on again he met the wife of a chief who was cleaning Durrka-corn. And Mafani said to the woman: "How strange that you, the wife of a powerful chief, should clean the corn yourself! Why not use some of the wind in my bag?"

And the woman took the bag and untied it to make use of the Wind. In a moment all the dust and snells were ~~blown~~ away, and only the clean and full weighted corn remained. But the bag which had contained the wind was empty.

"Why did you take all the wind?" Mafani

asked. "Now you can pay for it too. I was willing to do you a favor, but I do not care to be robbed!" And the woman, being well to do, paid him with a double measure of corn.

After Mafani had left the woman he noticed a flock of wild pigeons by the wayside, busily engaged in picking berries. And he said to them: "For land's sake! How can you live on such miserable fare? Why not try a bit of my corn?" And he opened his bag and set it before them.

In an incredible short time the pigeons had eaten all the corn. Not a solitary kernel was left.

When Mafani asked the pigeons to pay for the corn, they gave him a measure of oil-seed. Of this he made oil, put it into a calabash, and passed on.

And he came to a town where a woman had died. They were just making preparations for her burial. Everything they needed was on hand, except one very important item—oil, wherewith to anoint the body. When Mafani heard of their trouble, he offered them some of his oil. When they had used the last bit of it, Mafani demanded other oil in return. Being unable to pay, they let him have the dead woman.

Mafani took the body and went away.

When, shortly after, he came near another town, he took the body, placed it against a tree on the edge of a precipice, and entered the town, where a wrestling-match was just going on.

Mafani stood and looked on for a while.

Then he said to one of the maidens near him, whose beauty and rich apparel had attracted his attention: "I pray you, go and call my wife, who is waiting for me just back of the town. Her name is Mawum."

And the maiden went and found the woman leaning against a tree and sound asleep, as it seemed. And she called: "Mawum! Mawum!" When there was no answer, she went to wake her. But when she touched the body, it fell over and rolled down the precipice.

The maiden was almost frightened to death. When she had sufficiently recovered from the shock she ran back and told Mafani: "Your wife has fallen down the precipice!"

And Mafani said to the maiden: "What have you done? I shall hold your father responsible for my loss!" Thereupon the maiden's father gave his daughter to Mafani and said: "Take her, she is yours. May she be the life of your life and the joy of your heart."

And Mafani took his bride and returned to his Grandmother. They were very happy together and lived to a good old age.

All this happened in the long, long ago. But even to the present day the faces of the boys and girls in the Country of the Wute glow with joy when they listen to the story of Mafani, and how he won his bride.

(Wute)

XIII

PUNISHED INDIFFERENCE

Two men in a certain town were building new huts for themselves.

One day one of them noticed a young cotton tree near by. And he said to the other: "Let us cut the tree down while it is still small. It may cause us serious damage later on if we allow it to grow."

"Shucks!" said the other. "Why bother about it? It won't hurt us any."

And the tree was allowed to grow.

Some time after a terrible tornado passed over the place, laying low many giants of the forest, and also the cotton tree which, by this time, had grown to considerable size. With a crash it came down and fell on the hut of the self-same man who had said: "Let it grow, it won't hurt us any."

The hut was completely demolished, and the man and his wife and kiddies were killed.

(Wakweli)

XIV

THE ANT AND THE CRICKET

The Ant one day said to the Cricket: "Let us get to work and lay in provisions for the winter."

And the Cricket said: "I have other work on hand." And he commenced to beat the drum, calling the people to a dance.

When the Ant heard this, he asked all his relatives and friends to come and help him, and they all came and went to work with a will. They worked with all their might and kept at it, until the rainy season—the African winter—set in.

Pretty soon the rain came down in torrents. But the Ant was well provided for and had

nothing to fear. "Let it rain ropes if it will," said he, "my storehouses are full."

But the Cricket was in a sorry plight. He had not made provision for the winter, and hunger began to pinch him.

In his abject misery he went to the Ant and said: "Friend, hunger threatens to kill me; I pray you, help me out with some food."

"Where was you during harvest-time, when all of us were busy at work?" asked the Ant. And he gave him nothing.

(Wakweli)

XV

HOW THE ELEPHANT MADE A FOOL OF HIMSELF

The Elephant and the Bat were friends.

One day the Bat said to the Elephant: "Friend, if at any time you surprise me when I'm having my meal, then all the good things are yours. And if I surprise you when you are having your meal, then all the good things are mine. Is it a go?"

"It's a go," said the Elephant.

The very next day the Bat surprised the Elephant at his meal. So, in compliance with their previous agreement, the Elephant had to leave all the good things his wife had prepared for him to the Bat.

When the Bat was through eating, he hid himself under the roof without the Elephant knowing anything about it. So whenever the Elephant sat down to eat, the Bat surprised him and took his meal for himself.

In this way the Bat tormented the Elephant for a long time, until there was nothing left

of him but skin and bones. Not a single time did the Elephant succeed in surprising the Bat.

At last the Elephant got wild with rage and said: "The next time the Bat attempts to cheat me out of my meal I'll kill him, sure as I live!" Just then the Elephant's wife had the meal all ready to serve. And he told her to sit down and eat in his stead.

He had hardly finished speaking when he saw the Bat come in, seating himself on the edge of the bowl and commencing to eat. Without further thought he pulled his sword out of the scabbard and rushed toward the Bat. But instead of killing the Bat he cut the bowl in two, and the food was spilled and strewn all over the mud floor of the hut.

The Bat had taken refuge under the roof and looked on. When the Elephant saw him, his rage knew no bounds, and he said he could cut him in pieces and make hash of him. But instead of hitting and killing the Bat he struck the hut and cut it in two.

Then the Bat flew away to the field of the Elephant.

And the Elephant followed the Bat to the field with the one consuming desire to kill him. But instead of killing the Bat he only ruined his potato patch.

Then the Bat perched himself on top of a banana stalk. Again the Elephant said that he would kill him. But instead he only cut the banana stalks to pieces and devastated his own field.

The way the Elephant carried on was senseless in the extreme. He not only made a fool

of himself, but also caused a lot of damage. The desire to destroy seems to have become a fixed habit with him, for to the present day he takes delight in breaking the huts of the people and devastating their fields.

(Wakweli)

XVI

NO ONE CAN LIVE ON BEAUTY ALONE

Once upon a time there was a maiden who was known and admired for her beauty.

One day the thought took possession of her that she would only have to show herself in public, and the people would bring her all that she needed for a living, just for the sake of her beauty.

So, when she saw the women go to market, carrying loads of sweet potatoes, bananas and cocoa-jam, she put on her prettiest clothes, adorned herself with costly beads and bracelets, and followed the women to market.

When she arrived at the market, the women were all busy bartering their produce for dried fish, salt, earthen ware, and other commodities. But she herself stood by, empty handed, and had nothing wherewith to barter; neither did any one pay any attention to her. She stood and waited for a long time, but not even the tiniest little fish was offered her.

Empty handed and proud she had come, and empty handed and shamed she went home. She had learned that no one can live on beauty alone.

(Wakweli)

XVII

WHY CHAMELEONS AND SNAKES ARE HATED BY
MEN

Long long ago God sent the Chameleon upon the earth, saying: "Go and tell all men that they shall live again after death."

And the Chameleon went, to do as he had been told.

On his way he met a woman who was braiding a beautiful hat. And he thought to himself: "I'll stop just long enough to have this woman make me a head-dress. Then I'll pass on again." So he told the woman to get busy at once and braid a hat for him. The woman did as she was told. But it took her fully two weeks to finish the hat, and all this time the Chameleon delayed in making known the message of God.

In the mean time the Snake had heard about the wonderful message which the Chameleon was to make known among men. And he started out at once and told the people: "God has sent me with a message for you!"

After many people had gathered to hear, the Snake said: "Now listen to the message I bring: All men who die shall not come to life again. Death has them in his grip and will not permit them to return!"

When Death heard this he was very much elated and said: "What great power God has given me!"

To Sleep the Snake said: "Whenever you have people in your power, you must not hold them, but release them again." Sleep did as

he was told, and Death acted in accordance with what he had heard.

On the following day the Chameleon arrived. He at once called the people together and cried: "Everybody come and listen to the message I bring." God has sent me to you with some wonderful news. It is this: "All men who die shall rise and come to life again!"

When the people heard this, they answered and said: "We hold that you are a liar and telling us a falsehood. You have been giving us a story of your own invention. The Snake has told us otherwise."

"The Snake has deceived you," said the Chameleon.

On the following day many people met in the house of the Chameleon. And the Chameleon asked them: "Where is the Snake?" "In his hut," they answered. "Then go and tell him to come here," said the Chameleon.

When the Snake arrived, the Chameleon asked him: "Who has sent you?" "Who else but God?" answered the Snake. "That's a lie! I am God's messenger!" the Chameleon cried. And they began to fight.

Finally they went to God to have him settle the matter. And the Chameleon asked God: "Did you send the Snake with a message?" "No!" God answered. "I did not send him."

Then the Chameleon told how the Snake had lied to the people and betrayed them, and how Death had heard about it and killed many people.

Thereupon God said: "From now on people shall kill the Snake wherever they find him,

because he has shown himself to be their enemy and has done them great harm." Furthermore God said: "The Chameleon too should be punished, because he was slothful in proclaiming my message and has thereby brought great sorrow upon the people. Men shall abhor and persecute him wherever they find him."

(Wute)

XVIII

. PRUDENCE AND INDOLENCE

A certain man had two sons. The one he named Prudence, the other Indolence.

One day he called his sons and said: "I decided to present each one of you with a pair of doves. Take them and take good care of them."

Prudence took his doves and placed them in a neat box. He fed them regularly every day and took good care of them. The doves multiplied in such a wonderful manner, that after some time he was the proud possessor of a number of boxes, every one of which was filled with doves.

Indolence also placed his doves in a box. This he painted and put it away in a safe place.

After many days the father called his sons again and told them to bring their doves.

Then Prudence brought all the boxes which he had filled with doves. When the father saw how faithful Prudence had been, he was very much pleased and praised and blessed his son.

Indolence, on being told to bring his boxes,

brought but one box. To the father's great surprise it was the same box which he had given his son at the time when he presented him with the doves. The box was nicely painted and securely locked. On opening it only a pair of skeletons was found.

Thereupon the father severely punished his indolent son and sent him away.

(Wakweli)

XIX

THE FOX AND THE HEN

The Fox one day called the Hen to pick off the ticks that annoyed him. This the Hen did and then went home again.

On the following day the Fox again called the Hen to pick off the ticks. When he saw the Hen coming along, he pretended to be sound asleep. When the Hen had come within reach he suddenly jumped up and seized her by the leg.—“Keaw! Keaw!” it rang through the air as the Hen cried for help.

A man who was clearing a field near by happened to hear the screams of the Hen. He immediately dropped his tools and hurried to the scene. Seeing feathers in the mouth of the Fox he asked him: “Fox, did you eat the Hen?”

“No!” answered the Fox.

And the man said: “If you did not eat the Hen, how, then, do you account for the feathers in your mouth?”

“The feathers are of no account,” was the curt reply of the Fox,

(Wakweli)

XX

A TEST OF FRIENDSHIP

A certain man had three friends. The first one he loved very much. The second he loved beyond measure, and the third he esteemed very highly.

One day he was accused of having killed a man, and he was served a summons to appear before the King's Court. In the summons it was stated that he was to bring three reliable witnesses along with him—men who were known for their integrity and love of the truth. He at once went to his friends and asked them to accompany him to the King's Court and witness in his behalf. And all three consented to do him the favor.

On the way to the King's Court the accused man said to the first friend, whom he loved very much: "Friend, I pray you, testify in my behalf!" But he would not and turned back. He also asked the second friend, whom he loved beyond measure, and he readily consented to do him the favor. Likewise he asked the third friend once more, and he too was willing.

When they had come within hearing distance of the King's Court they heard how the King was in a terrible rage. When the second friend heard this, he became afraid and, like the first friend, turned back. But the third friend, who was loved the least, went along into the King's Court and testified in behalf of the accused, who was acquitted.

(Wakweli)

XXI

HOW THE TURTLE OUTWITTED THE PIG

Mrs. Turtle one day heard of a dance which was to take place in a neighboring town. She was very anxious to go, but had no necklace to put on. After thinking over the matter, she went to her friend, Mrs. Pig, who lived at the other end of the town, to borrow her necklace. Her friend was only too glad to help her out, and with great expectations of a jolly good time Mrs. Turtle hurried off.

During the dance, and in the midst of all the excitement, the necklace was stolen from Mrs. Turtle. This greatly troubled her mind and caused her to leave the dance before time.

On her way home she stopped in at Mrs. Pig's place.

"Have you come back with my necklace?" Mrs. Pig asked.

"They have stolen it from me," replied Mrs. Turtle in a sorrowful tone.

"Then you shall pay for it," indignantly answered Mrs. Pig.

Several moons had passed. During all this time nothing was seen of Mrs. Turtle. So Mrs. Pig one day said to her husband: "Grunty, you had better go to the hut of the Turtle and see about the payment for my necklace. I must have another in time for the big dance at the next full moon. You had better be up and doing. There is no time to be lost!"

So Grunty went to the hut of the Turtle.

When the Turtle saw Grunty the Pig coming toward his hut, he said to his wife: "If the

Pig comes in here, you tell him that I am not at home!" Then he threw himself down, bottom side up, and pulled in his head and legs. In this position he looked very much like a whetstone.

After the Pig had entered he asked: "Where is the Turtle?"

"He is not in," the Turtle's wife lied.

On hearing this, the Pig got very angry, and noticing what he supposed to be a whetstone lying on the floor, he said: "I am going to take his whetstone." And he picked up the imaginary whetstone, not knowing that it was the Turtle turned bottom side up, and with it left the hut.

He hid the imaginary whetstone in the grass by the wayside, and marked the place with a stick. Then he went back to the hut of the Turtle to await his return.

Immediately after Grunty the Pig had left him, the Turtle righted himself and walked off. In the meantime the Pig was impatiently awaiting the Turtle's return.

After some time the Turtle returned to his hut and there met Grunty the Pig.

The Pig, on seeing the Turtle, at once blurted out: "Pay me for the necklace which your wife has borrowed and lost!"

Just at this moment Mrs. Turtle, who was in an adjoining room and had heard the words of the Pig, stuck her head through the door and said: "The Pig took your whetstone away while you were gone!"

Then the Turtle said to the Pig: "First bring

back my whetstone, if you want me to pay you."

And the Pig went back to the place where he hid the whetstone, only to discover that the whetstone was gone. He searched all over the place, but could not find it.

The Pig was in a rather gloomy mood, when he came back to the hut of the Turtle and said: "Someone must have stolen the whetstone. I had hidden it in the grass, but it is no longer there. In some mysterious way it has disappeared, and I cannot find it."

When the Turtle heard this, he said to the Pig: "Do not think for a moment that you can get your necklace before you have returned my whetstone!"

The Pig is still looking for the whetstone. So anxious is he to find it that he has even taught his children to grub up the ground.

(Wakweli)

XXII

THE MAN WHO WANTED TO FOOL DEATH

Once upon a time there lived a man who thought, if he could only know the day of his death, he would be able to forestall the approach of his last enemy and trick him.

One day he took sick, and fearing that he would die, he called his wife and told her to hurry and send for the witchdoctor.

When the witchdoctor came, the patient asked him and said: "How long have I yet to live?"

"Yet two moons, and you must die!" the witchdoctor answered.

Acting on this information the patient told his sons to get to work at once and dig a big hole about the size of a living-room. When this was done, he told them to fill this dugout with all kinds of provisions, such as sweet potatoes, plantains and cocoa-yam; also with water and fire-wood in sufficient quantities. When all preparations were completed, he himself went into the dugout.

Before he had his sons fill up and cover the hole, he made them promise not to speak to any one of his whereabouts. Last of all he told them not to forget and call for him after two months had passed. The sons promised, and then filled up the hole.

Two months later when they returned to call for their father, nothing but his skeleton was found. This foolish man wanted to fool Death, but Death fooled him. No man can escape Death.

(Wakweli)

XXIII

THE PARROT AND THE OWL

The Parrot and the Owl were jealous of one another and frequently quarreled.

One day one of the Parrot's children was taken ill and died, and the Parrot accused the Owl of having killed his child. "The Owl and I had a quarrel," said he. "I am sure he is guilty! Just mark the expression of fear in his face!"

And everybody believed the words of the Parrot.

As there were no witnesses to the supposed evil deed of the Owl, his innocence or guilt

was to be established by an ordeal, where God himself was to judge.

The "medicine," of which both the Parrot and the Owl were to drink, was prepared at the appointed time and place. The one vomiting the extremely bitter concoction was to be considered innocent, and the one retaining it, guilty.

Both of them drank.

To the great surprise of those present the Owl vomited the medicine, while the Parrot retained it. And the Owl was acquitted.

On their way home the Parrot said to the Owl: "Listen, Friend! You return home by way of the bush, while I take the direct path to town. I am anxious to tell the people myself: 'The Owl has won his case against me—I lost!'"

To this the Owl consented and went his way as directed.

As the Parrot passed on, he colored his tail a bright red—as a sign of victory—and cried with a loud voice, that all should hear: "The Owl has lost his case against me! I vomited the medicine! I won!"

When the people saw the Parrot, they asked: "And what has become of the Owl? Where is he?"

"He lost," the Parrot replied, "and for very shame over his defeat he is making his way home by way of the bush."

When the people heard this, they all wondered and said: 'Of a truth, the Parrot has won!'"

The Owl, on hearing what had happened,

hurried to town and told the people: "The Parrot lied! It is I that won!" But the people would not believe him and threw stones at him.

Then the Owl fled and took refuge in the jungle, where he lives ever since. He hides himself during the day. But at night he visits the town and cries: "Oo hoo! Oo hoo! I have won, I have won!"

(Wakweli)

XXIV

HOW THE HEN AND THE DUCK BECAME FRIENDS

One day the Hen was getting ready for her regular after lunch snooze, when she saw the entire family of the birds coming toward her hut. Not knowing their intentions, she naturally was very much alarmed, the more so, when she saw the Hawk and the Eagle among them. While she was still wondering what would happen, the Crane, stretching his neck to its full length, walked up and said: "Hen, we have come to the conclusion that you too belong to our clan, and we want you to come along with us! Hurry and get yourself ready!"

The Hen was satisfied. Hurriedly she got her few belongings together, tied them in a neat little bundle and marched along with the rest.

On the way to their town the birds had to cross a big river. So they all went into a canoe.

When they had come to the middle of the river the canoe ran upon a log which was hidden under the surface of the water, and it broke in two.

Then all the birds blamed the Hen for the accident and said: "Hen, you are the cause of all this!"

"Am I really that heavy as to break the canoe? I am innocent of this mishap," said the Hen.

But the birds would not listen to the Hen's protests and threw her into the river. If it had not been for the duck who took the Hen on her back and carried her to the opposite shore, she certainly would have drowned. This explains why the Hen and the Duck live together and are such intimate friends.

(Wakweli)

XXV

ALL FOR THE SKIN OF A LION

"Friend," said the Lion one day to the Rabbit, "stop and listen what I have to tell you: Should you ever happen to run across the Deer anywhere, then let me know, but secretly, mind you!"

It was the good fortune of the Rabbit to meet the Deer the very next day.

"Listen," whispered the Rabbit to the Deer, "the Lion is after you! Let me advise you to be on your guard!"

"You don't say!" answered the Deer. "How good of you to go out of your way to warn me! I sincerely hope to be able and do you a good turn some day."

After the Rabbit had left the Deer the Mountain Goat came along. And the Deer beckoned him to come near, and then said: "Listen, cousin; and don't forget what I tell you! If at any time you should happen to meet the

Lion who is searching for me so diligently, then greet him in my behalf and tell him that I will never do him the favor of letting him catch me!"

When the Lion heard this from the lips of the Goat, his rage knew no bounds. "Who in all the world could have apprised the Deer of my intentions!" he roared. "More likely as not the Rabbit played this infamous trick on me! But wait, you rascal! If ever I meet you, it will cost you your skin!"

After many futile efforts to ensnare and catch the Rabbit the Lion one day suprised him while he was sleeping under the ledge of a rock. "Ah! got him at last," thought he. "Just let me get hold of him! I shall rip him to shreds!"

Just as he was about to act, the Rabbit, quick as a flash, shot out between the Lion's legs, and before the latter had time to think what had happened, he was gone.

Several days later the Rabbit unexpectedly ran up against the Lion. He saw, at a glance, that this time an attempt to escape would be useless. So he mustered up courage, walked up to the Lion and devotedly greeted him as his Superior and King.

"Where have you come from, you miserable scamp of a tattler?" the Lion roared.

May your majesty live forever! I have been told that your majesty is building a new palace, and I thought it to be my duty to come and offer my humble services, meekly answered the Rabbit.

"Well, well," said the Lion, feeling at once

pleased and flattered at the words of the Rabbit, "that certainly is good of you! Come right along, and we will get to work at once. I am just putting on the roof. You can climb right up and lay the mats in position. I shall go inside and fasten them to the frame."

"Your humble servant, My Lord," said the Rabbit. "But how can a simple and insignificant creature like me work on the roof? I fear I shall make a bungling job of it. No, My Lord, that is work for the great, for men of experience. Let me work inside, I pray you. I can tie the mats to the frame, while you work outside on the roof."

"I believe you are right," said the Lion, who again felt flattered at the words of the Rabbit.

Harmoniously they worked together, the Lion outside on the roof, and the Rabbit inside. The mats they tied to the framework of the roof with bushrope, in the following manner: the Lion would pierce the mats from the top and stick through them one end of the rope. This the Rabbit would pull down, twist it around one of the staves of the frame, and then pierce the mats from below. The Lion would then pull up the rope, draw it tight, and proceed as before. In this way all the mats were tied to the frame of the roof.

While they were at work it so happened that the Lion's tail hung down through the roof.

The Lion was so taken up with his work that he never thought of the possibility of being tied to the roof by his tail. But the Rabbit thought only the more of it. Here was

an opportunity to get square with the Lion, and he made use of it. Every time when he twisted the rope to tie a mat he also twisted it around the Lion's tail and pulled it tight.

When the Lion felt the stinging pain in his tail he thought that he was being maliciously pricked by the Rabbit with the pointed end of the rope. And he called down to the Rabbit: "What are you up to, you scoundrel, what do you mean by pricking me?"

"Not so, My Lord," answered the Rabbit from below. "I only picked off a few ticks which I happened to see on your tail."

"How good of you," said the Lion. "I should have known."

When the Rabbit had convinced himself that the Lion's tail was securely tied, he said: "Hunger pinches me, My Lord! And you have such delicious meat in your cooking-pot! May I help myself to a bit?"

"All right," answered the Lion. "But beware of taking the choicest and best; a lean piece ought to be good enough for you!"

The Rabbit, utterly ignoring the words of the Lion, sat down to eat.

When the Lion, who was watching from the roof, noticed how the Rabbit helped himself to the choicest and best pieces, he cried: "Hey, you there! did I not tell you to take a lean piece?"

"I take what I please," retorted the Rabbit.

This thoroughly aroused the Lion and, jumping up, he roared: "You good-for-nothing and scoundrel, did you hear what I said?" As he spoke, he wanted to jump off the roof. But

alas! he was tied to the roof by his tail, unable to move from the spot. Every effort to free himself not only caused him more pain, but also tightened the rope only the more.

When the Rabbit saw that the Lion was tied, he got up and killed him. The skin he took and with it adorned himself. "There," said he, "now all the animals will flee in terror before me." Then he arose and went to the home of the Monkeys.

The Monkeys were just getting ready for a feast, and big pots of beer were steaming over the fire. All of them expected to have a jolly good time. They sat around the fire in a circle and smacked their tongues in anticipation of the treat that awaited them.

Suddenly the Rabbit, disguised as a Lion, appeared in their midst! Fear and consternation took possession of them. What in all the world could the Lion want? What object could he have in coming upon them so suddenly? These were the thoughts that troubled their minds.

Trembling with fear the Chief of the Monkeys arose and said: "We are glad to welcome you in our midst, O Lion!"

"Thank you," said he, and sat down.

"How do you fare, O King?" some of the more daring of the Monkeys ventured to ask.

"Very well," answered, with a condescending gesture, the Lion.

"May we offer you a ladle or two of our water, O King?" asked the head of the clan, and two big pots of beer were placed before him. The chief then filled a ladle with beer,

sipped of it, and then offered it to his distinguished guest, who at once dipped the ladle into the pot, filled it to the brim and drank, with the hearty approval of the assembly.

"To your health, King of the Monkeys!" they shouted.

With all these honors heaped upon him the Rabbit was more than pleased. It was a new sensation to him to be praised and looked upon as the acknowledged Lord over all.

Shortly after this the Monkeys arose and said: "It may have caused you to wonder, O King, why we have gathered in this wise and at this time. But the beer which you see and of which you have tasted has been brewed for our friends who help us to cultivate our fields. You certainly know that this is just the time of the year for such work."

"Quite so, quite so!" said the Lion. "But you must not be disturbed on my account. Just go to your fields. On your return you will certainly find me still here."

Thereupon the Monkeys picked up their hoes and started, single file, for their farms in the jungle.

They had not gone very far when one of their number discovered that they had forgotten the seed-corn.

"Wait," said one of the men, "I'll hurry back and to get it."

When he reached the enclosure where they had left the Lion, he hurriedly brushed through the door. To his amazement he saw the side of a Lion spread out on the ground, and a Rabbit sitting on top of it. "Aha!" said the

Monkey, after he had sufficiently recovered from the shock, "the Lion was but a Rabbit in disguise."

And he hurried back and told the others what he had seen—not the Lion, but a Rabbit sitting on a Lion's skin and picking off ticks.

"Up, let us catch and punish the Rabbit," they all cried, after they had heard the strange news. And in wild haste they hurried back to their kraal.

When the Rabbit heard the shouting and tramping of feet coming near he became alarmed. He instinctively felt that trouble was ahead, that something was going to happen if he did not bethink himself in time. So, acting on the spur of the moment, he leaped over the enclosure and fled, leaving the skin of the Lion behind.

When the Monkeys saw that the Rabbit had fled, they followed in pursuit, determined to revenge themselves on the mean trickster.

The Rabbit succeeded in hiding himself in a hollow tree. His pursuers just missed seeing him and hurried by.

A diligent search was made in the high grass and among the brambles, but no trace of the Rabbit was found.

The Monkeys got wild. "Where in all the world can he be?" they all cried. "Did the earth swallow him up?"

During all this time the Rabbit had felt quite secure in his safe retreat. But then something happened which it was not in his power to prevent. A nasty little fly had crept into his nose and caused him to sneeze. This the

Monkeys heard and commenced to search anew in the direction whence the sound had come.

Closer and closer the Monkeys came to the tree where the Rabbit was hiding. He could plainly hear them talk and understand what they said.

Afraid that after all his pursuers might detect him, the Rabbit left his retreat in the hope of reaching the plain. But the Monkeys had seen him and rushed on in wild and relentless pursuit.

The Rabbit had a good start. And the patches of underbrush and Sudan grass decidedly were in his favor and helped to conceal him, for a time at least. Nevertheless he knew that his capture would be only a matter of time, unless he managed, somehow, to trick them again.—A mud puddle which he chanced to see right ahead of him served his purpose most admirably. Running straight into it he rolled himself in the mud several times and then sat down by the wayside.

Presently the Monkeys came along. On seeing the Rabbit they took him to be a stranger and cried: "Hey, there, you mudwiggle, did you see a Rabbit run by here?"

"I saw one run by only a few minutes ago," the Rabbit lied. "You certainly must have seen the cloud of dust which he raised."

On hearing this the Monkeys hurried on. They kept up the pursuit until sunset. Then they went home, disappointed and tired, and pledging themselves to take bloody revenge on the Rabbit at the first chance.

The Lion's skin which the Rabbit had left behind, the Chief of the Monkeys took for himself. He donned it every time he went hunting, to frighten the animals with.

One day, while out in search of big game, he met the Tiger, who had just killed a Mountain Goat. And he commenced to roar in a most frightful manner, so as to create the impression that he really was a Lion.

When the Tiger saw and heard he fled and left the Mountain Goat behind. This was just what the Chief of the Monkeys wanted. He at once called his people together and bade them carry home the game.

Soon after the Tiger killed an Antelope. He was just getting ready for his meal, when again the terrible roar of the Lion was heard. Presently the rustling underbrush parted, and there stood the Monkey in the disguise of a Lion.

Again the Tiger fled, leaving the Antelope to the Monkey, who now began to poke fun at the credulity of the Tiger.

One day it happened that the Tiger met some of the Monkey's children while they were at play in a field. And he made use of this opportunity and carried one of the little Monkeys off. The others ran away, screaming.

On reaching his hut in the jungle, the Tiger questioned his little prisoner and said: "Tell me, where is the den of the Lion that continuously robs me? I had caught a Mountain Goat, and he robbed me of it. Later on I caught an Antelope. This too he took away from me.

I am willing to let you go if you reveal to me the hiding place of the Lion."

Then the little fellow, trembling with fear, said to the Tiger: "Be it known unto you, O King, that it is not a Lion that troubles you, but the Chief of the Monkeys, disguised as a Lion. But I beg you, my Lord, not to betray me. If you tell this thing to my people they will surely kill me."

"I have heard," growled the Tiger, "away with you now!"

And the little Monkey ran off, glad to have saved his life.

Not so very long after the Chief of the Monkeys again went out hunting. But this time the Tiger was hiding in the underbrush and laying in wait for him.

"There comes my man!" said the Tiger, when he heard the roar of the Lion. Soon he heard a rustling noise near by, and he placed himself in position.

Unsuspectingly the Chief of the Monkeys came up. While he was looking about, seemingly lost in thought, the Tiger suddenly swooped down upon him, and in less time than it takes to tell, the Tiger held the Monkey tight in his clutches.

Realizing that resistance was useless, the Chief of the Monkeys said to the Tiger: "My Lord, I pray you, grant to me an opportunity to parley with you!"

"What ransom have you to offer?" the Tiger asked.

"Come with me, my Lord?" the Chief of the Monkeys replied, "and I will show you."

"Then the Monkey led the Tiger to a giant tree, the lower branches of which were one dense mass of foliage, while its upper branches were laden with delicious fruit.

"My Lord, hide yourself in the branches below," said the Monkey, while I climb into the top."

"First take off the skin and leave it down here with me," said the Tiger.

"Of a truth, my Lord, I believe you are right," answered the Monkey, as he divested himself of the skin.

The Tiger took the skin of the Lion, folded it together and laid it aside.

"Now," said the Monkey, "when I climb into the top and shake the branches the fruit will fall down, and the Deer and Mountain Goats who are very fond of it, will assemble under the tree. Then is your chance. It will be up to you to make use of it."

The prediction of the Monkey came true. He shook the branches with all his might, and as the fruit fell to the ground, many Deer and Mountain Goats gathered under the tree to feed.

When the Tiger saw this, he picked out the fattest Goat, leaped down and laid hold of his prey.

Shortly after the Monkey too came down, humbly approached the Tiger and said: "My Lord, you hold my ransom in your hands!"

"I have received it," answered the Tiger.

Then the Monkey mustered up courage and asked the Tiger for the return of the Lion's skin. "My Lord," said he, "could you not

make me a present of the skin? I make my living by it. If I put it on and roar, all the animals except you are afraid of me. Therefore let me have the skin, I pray you."

"You may take it," growled the Tiger. I have no use for it anyhow, for I live by my own prowess and strength. Take the filthy thing, if you care so much for it."

Then the Monkey donned the skin again, expressed his gratitude to the Tiger, and disappeared in the jungle.

(Zulu)

XXVI

HOW THE MONKEY SAVED THE ANTELOPE FROM DEATH

The Python one day posted himself near a trail where the animals of the Forest were accustomed to pass on their way to the river. And he cried with a loud voice and threatened to catch them. And he did catch a straggler, the Dwarf Antelope, and said that he would swallow him just as he was, hide and hair, head and tail, all in a lump.

At this critical moment the Monkey happened to come along. On seeing him, the Antelope called to him at the top of his voice: "Friend, the Python has caught me, and he threatens to eat me up!"

The Monkey, on hearing this, said to the Python: "Now tell me your side of the story!"

"I have caught him, and I shall certainly eat him up," answered the Python.

"For land's sake, do open your hands when you talk, and don't act like an old woman,"

said the Monkey. Then the Python felt ashamed and loosened his coils.

The Antelope understood. Quick as a flash he extricated himself and fled. The Monkey also sped away, glad that he had been the means of saving his little friend the Antelope from certain death.

(Wakweli)

XXVII

THE LEOPARD AND THE PYTHON

The Leopard was a most proud and self-conceited fellow, and to have undisputed dominion, his one consuming desire. He was a courageous fellow, too. But there existed at least two things that he feared: the trap and the gun!

One day he heard the firing of a gun. This reminded him anew of the obstacles that stood in his way. He got so wrought up about it that, in a fit of wild rage, he roared: "If it were not for the trap and the gun, the whole jungle and all that it contains would be mine, and mine alone. Beside these two there is nothing that I fear."

When the Python heard the boastful words of the Leopard he was not a little put out about it and said: "Just wait, you braggard, I'll show you!"

The Python was determined to carry out his threat at once. His plans were quickly made. Calling the Antelope, he said to him: "Friend, I have a bone to pick with the Leopard, who is your enemy as well as mine, and I need your help. Do just as I tell you, and you shall not regret it. Now listen! We'll go to the trail over yonder, where the Leopard must pass

shortly on his way to the brook. I'll wait for him there. Cover me well with dry banana leaves, so nothing can be seen of me. When you are done, you go to the place where you hear the Leopard roaring. When he runs after you to catch you, then you hurry back to this place and stand directly behind me. The rest you leave to me."

And the Antelope did as he was told.

When the Leopard saw the Antelope coming he at once bounded forward to catch him. But the Antelope turned about and fled toward the place where the Python was hiding, with the Leopard in close pursuit.

When the Antelope had reached the place where the Python was lying in ambush, he stood still and waited for the Leopard to come up.

The Leopard at first seemed puzzled by the strange action of the Antelope. But thinking that the Antelope had met with an accident and was, for this reason, unable to go any further, he rushed on again, quite sure of his prey.

When the Leopard had reached the place, and before he ever had a chance to take the Antelope, the Python suddenly shot up and coiled himself around him, threatening to crush the very life out of him.

The Leopard roared and wriggled for pain.

After a while the Python said to the Leopard:

"Why did you not mention me in your rage as one you are afraid of? The trap and the gun you mentioned."

By this time the Leopard was held in such a tight grip that there was danger of his life being utterly crushed out of him. Fearing the worst he piteously entreated the Python and said: "Python, brother, do have mercy on me and let loose a bit, and I shall roar in a manner to satisfy you."

And the Python had mercy and loosened his hold.

Then the Leopard roared with a loud voice, so that everybody should hear: "If it were not for the trap and the gun, the jungle and everything in it would belong to the Python and me—to us two alone!"

"Roar again," said the Python.

And the Leopard roared again, saying the same words as before.

"Now let me have one of your claws," said the Python. This the Leopard did, and the Python took the claw and wore it as a spur on the tip of his tail.

In this wise it became known that the Leopard and the Python are the two strongest and most feared animals in the African jungle.
(Wakweli)

XXVIII

THE RACE BETWEEN THE TURTLE AND THE ANTELOPE

The Antelope one day saw the Turtle coming along. And he taunted him and said: "I always thought that I was a fast runner, but you certainly beat me!"

"I'll take you for a race," said the Turtle.

"All right, it's a go!" retorted the Antelope.

And they agreed to run a race together, beginning at a given point on the seashore, to the peak of the Great Cameroons Mountain.

Then the Turtle went and called the members of his clan together and said: "The Antelope and I are going to run a race to the peak of the Great Cameroons Mountain. Now you go and hide yourself along the way. When you hear the Antelope coming, you quickly step out on the path, ahead of him, and cry: "Don't be in such a hurry. I am here too!"

The relatives of the Turtle did as they were told.

On the day when the race was to come off they started at the appointed time and place. The Antelope started, and the Turtle followed close behind.

The Antelope ran for all he was worth, without looking back or noticing the Turtles that were waiting for him all along the way. He kept on running until he was too tired to go any farther. But just as he wanted to rest, he saw the Turtle ahead of him who, on seeing him, cried: "Don't be in such a hurry! I am here too!"

Then the Antelope started to run again. After a while, when he made another attempt to rest, he again saw the Turtle ahead of him, crying as before. The same thing happened over and over again.

The Antelope all the while thought that it was the same Turtle all along the way. He kept on running until at last he dropped over from exhaustion and died.

Then the Turtle took the horns of the Ante-

lope, brought them in triumph to the assembly of the animals and cried: "I won the race! I won the race!"

(Wakweli)

XXIX

THE LEOPARD AND THE CRANE

One day the Leopard said to the Crane: "There is no reason why you and I should not be friends. Why not come together some day and have a good heart to heart talk?"

But the Crane had his doubts about the sincerity of the Leopard and would not fall in with his proposal. Later on, however, the Leopard succeeded in arranging a meeting between them.

At this meeting the Crane was seated on the branch of a tree. While the Leopard was talking, he amused himself by pulling out some of his superfluous feathers and throwing them on the ground.

With great eagerness the Leopard picked up the feathers and plucked them to pieces. When the Crane saw this he drew his own conclusions, and he said to the Leopard: "If you already treat my feathers this way, what would happen if I myself came near you? You are the last one I would choose for a friend. Better try your cunning on some one else!"

And he flew away and left the Leopard to himself.

(Wakweli)

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